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UNEMPLOYMENT and PARTIAL EMPLOYMENT of HIRED FARM WORKERS

in ROSWELL
and ARTESIA,
NEW MEXICO
May 1951-May 1952



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, Bureau of Employment Security
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IN THE FARM INDUSTRY
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UNEMPLOYMENT

and PARTIAL EMPLOYMENT

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NEW MEXICO

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In the spring of 1952, the employment histories of a sample of seasonal farm wage workers living in Roswell and Artesia, New Mexico, were studied by the Bureau of Employment Security and the Bureau of Agricultural Economics^{1/}. This was one of four surveys made in selected cities and towns in the South and Southwest where there are concentrations of seasonal cotton workers. The other three areas studied are Cordele, Georgia; Pine Bluff, Arkansas; Opelousas and surrounding towns, Louisiana^{2/}.

This survey was designed to provide information about the extent of employment of seasonal farm workers in these areas; their characteristics, skills, and training; and their availability for additional local and non-local employment. Wage and earnings information was also obtained to indicate the level of living and degree of security of farm workers in the areas studied. Such information is useful to agencies engaged in planning and operating programs for farm manpower. The seasonal nature of some farm work results in periods of acute labor shortages followed by periods of substantial surpluses of farm workers. The imperfect

functioning of farm labor markets, especially in relation to each other, may result in underemployment in one area while another area, at the same time, has difficulty in filling its labor needs. The problem of coordinating farm employment is of great importance to farm workers, farm operators, farm organizations, and government agencies concerned with the full use of farm labor resources. In this connection, it is important to know the extent to which unemployed workers in one area can be considered as available for work in other areas.

Although the survey was made in a period of partial defense mobilization, with a tight labor situation resulting from the Korean conflict, the conditions studied and the conclusions reached are relevant to a peacetime economic setting. Unemployment and partial employment have characterized the seasonal farm activities for decades. Some of the important underlying causes are the mechanization and specialization of agricultural production. In large commercialized agricultural enterprises, most activities connected with planting and cultivating of field crops have been mechanized, with the result that fewer year-round workers are employed

^{1/} Bureau of Agricultural Economics has since been reorganized and units transferred to the Agricultural Research Service and the Agricultural Marketing Service.

^{2/} See Unemployment and Partial Employment of Hired Farm Workers in Four Areas, A Summary Report, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Employment Security, April 1953.

and there is greater dependence on hired seasonal farm workers for short seasons of intensive harvest activities, which are still performed largely by hand. Unem-

ployment of farm workers is also related to changes in tenure practices resulting in more hired labor and fewer tenant farmers for seasonal agricultural work.

HOW THE STUDY WAS MADE

The focus of the study in Roswell and Artesia was on farm workers who reside in these cities, commuting to nearby farming areas during seasons of agricultural activity. Sections of Roswell and Artesia in which the farm worker population was concentrated were indicated on maps prepared by the local offices of the State Employment Service. A random sample of blocks was drawn within these sections, and all households in the blocks selected were visited.

For each household, an identification sheet was completed. This sheet contained screening questions to determine whether or not schedules should be taken for the household. Households without farm workers, and those of farm operators, were eliminated from the survey. Of the 1,034 households contacted in the two cities, 92 were selected for interview, since they contained farm workers who had worked for wages in the preceding year. These 92 households represent every third farm-worker household in the survey area. Since the number of farm workers in the survey households was 165, the actual farm-worker population living in the two cities at the time of the survey was approximately 500^{3/}.

An interview schedule was completed for each household head, and a different form was used for the other persons in the household who had done farm work for wages in the 12 preceding months. Household heads were asked about the composition of the household and about their own work histories in the preceding year. Other workers in the households were questioned concerning their week-by-week record of employment and their activities during weeks when not employed. For each period of employment, questions were asked about duration of employment, type and location of work, wages and perquisites, earnings, method of wage payment, and method of finding out about jobs. Workers were also questioned about periods when they were not employed to determine whether they were out of the labor force or available for work. One section of the schedule, dealing with the days and hours of employment in the 2 weeks immediately preceding the interview, was designed to measure the extent of partial employment. Workers 16 to 60 years of age were asked supplemental questions about their work outlook for the coming year and the periods during which they expected to be available for additional local or non-local employment.

SUMMARY

Farm work in southeast New Mexico is performed in part by resident on-farm workers and in part by migrant workers

from Texas and other areas. Mexican nationals are recruited under a Government program to supplement the domestic

^{3/} Census of Population, 1950 shows 401 employed persons in Roswell and 120 in Artesia engaged in agricultural work in April 1950.

labor supply. A small proportion of the seasonal work force is drawn from the population of cities in the area. It is among these urban farm workers living in Roswell and Artesia that the study was made.

Although livestock and alfalfa crops are important in the Pecos Valley where Roswell and Artesia are situated, the major crop requiring off-farm seasonal hired workers for intensive hand operations is cotton, which is grown on irrigated land.

Farm workers living in Roswell and Artesia are principally Spanish-Americans. Of approximately 2,500 Spanish-Americans in the labor force of the two cities, 500 are dependent wholly or partly on farm wage work, and almost all of the workers interviewed were of this group. The remaining Spanish-American workers in the Roswell and Artesia areas are employed largely as unskilled and semi-skilled workers in trade, mining, construction, and service industries. Most of the skilled jobs in the petroleum, natural gas, and potash-mining industries are held by Anglo-American workers.

Farm-worker households are large with 5 or more family members, as a rule. Usually 2 or 3 persons in the family are in the labor force. Farm workers are mostly adult males in vigorous years of life. Some women and youth also work on farms. There were almost no farm workers under 14 reported in the survey group. The fact that many farm workers were found to be primary workers is significant because it means that the families surveyed are dependent largely on income from farm work. In other areas surveyed, farm work was often done by secondary workers in families where the primary workers held nonfarm jobs.

The survey showed that unemployment was extensive among the farm-worker group interviewed. About one-half of the workers surveyed were unemployed at

least once during the survey year, and many had two or more periods of unemployment, each lasting an average of 8.3 weeks. At times during the year--mainly in the late winter--as many as 40 percent of all workers surveyed were unemployed. Most of those affected by unemployment were adult male workers who were continuously in the labor force. Wives and youth usually withdrew from the labor force when not actually employed, and, therefore, were not considered unemployed. In order to estimate partial employment, employed workers were asked about their work experience in the 2 weeks preceding the time of interview, and their responses showed that many had worked only part-time because of time lost in shifting between jobs, time lost because of bad weather, or lack of work.

The intermittent nature of seasonal farm work plus the lack of alternative employment opportunities was the underlying cause of unemployment in the area. Most workers surveyed had had at least two different work periods during the preceding year and some had as many as five or more. Most of these periods involved work for two or more employers. Typically, jobs in cotton-chopping lasted 30 days, beginning in the late spring, while the average period in cotton harvesting was of 60 days' duration. Local workers found jobs mainly by returning to former employers or by contacts arranged through friends and relatives. Crew leaders were responsible for part of the recruitment process, particularly for work in production areas of nearby States.

The average earnings for the 165 farm workers surveyed in Roswell and Artesia were \$900 for about 130 days of farm work and 35 days of nonfarm work. The average male family head earned \$1,250 from a combination of farm and nonfarm work during the survey year, and sons over 16 averaged \$1,025, while other secondary workers earned about \$500 in farm and nonfarm work during the year. Wage rates were \$4 to \$5 per day for

cotton-chopping and \$2 to \$3 per hundred pounds for cotton-picking. Nonfarm rates averaged \$8 per day or more.

One-third of the workers interviewed were migrants who had supplemented local farm work by working in the cotton harvest and in other agricultural activities in other areas of New Mexico and in other States. The readiness of this group of workers to migrate in order to extend their employment over periods of seasonal lulls was also shown by the fact that one-fourth of the workers aged 16 to 60 who expected to work seasonally in the coming year said they would accept non-local farm jobs during periods when they were not otherwise employed.

For workers of this group who are willing to migrate to other areas for farm employment, more complete utilization could be effected if arrangements can be made to schedule their migration to other areas for off-season farm jobs. In the complex farm labor market of today, the coordination of the supply and demand for seasonal farm labor frequently needs to be extended beyond the area. The network of public employment offices, through planning on a statewide, regional, or national scale, may be able to organize the movements of migrant workers by means of pre-season arrangements with growers. Arrangements for definite job offers for those workers who are willing to migrate to parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, or Texas, where workers are needed, may be feasible. Similar arrangements are effected for the migratory workers along the Eastern Seaboard.

Since most of the workers in the localities were not willing or not able to migrate, unemployment would still be considerable even with such a plan.

From the long-range standpoint, the fact that youth in the surveyed group have higher levels of educational attainment than their parents may be significant. It indicates that boys and girls now in school may qualify for work at higher skills than the work done by their parents. This information points to the likelihood that youngsters reaching working age may enter the labor market with primary interest in nonfarm jobs. Such a conclusion is supported by experience on the Eastern Seaboard with respect to the shift of farm youth to urban industrial centers. In southeastern New Mexico farmers are already recruiting Mexican nationals for seasonal farm jobs to supplement the number of American workers willing to do that type of work.

If the present group of workers who make up the seasonal farm work force are absorbed into other farm and nonfarm occupations, farmers in the area may hasten the mechanization of harvest operations. In 1952, 12 percent of the cotton grown in New Mexico was harvested by mechanical pickers, almost twice as much as in the preceding year. Although mechanized cotton harvesting is making progress, it is still less advanced than mechanization in Arizona and California where conditions of terrain, weather, moisture, length of growing season, and size of farms are similar.

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The farm workers living in Roswell and Artesia are employed seasonally in the cotton farms of Chaves and Eddy Counties. Located in the Pecos River area of southeastern New Mexico, these counties are important for cotton, livestock,

alfalfa, and vegetable production. About one-third of all the cotton in New Mexico is grown in Chaves and Eddy Counties, and about one-seventh of the total value of livestock products sold in the State comes from this area.

Farms in the area are typically large commercial enterprises with an annual production of \$10,000 or more. Part of the farmland is irrigated by artesian wells or shallow springs. On this irrigated land, 100,000 bales of cotton are produced annually, averaging about 1 bale to the acre. The Census of 1950 classified 386 farms in Chaves County and 398 in Eddy County as primarily cotton farms, but cotton is also grown on other farms which are primarily livestock, dairy, or general farming enterprises.

Although cotton provides some year-round employment, its biggest demand for labor is from mid-May to mid-July for cotton-chopping and hoeing, and from mid-September to mid-January for harvesting. Ground preparation, plowing, disking, and fertilizing begin in February. During March, planting and irrigation work are begun. Plantings are staggered from March to May. In May, seasonal workers are employed to chop weeds from between the young cotton plants. This activity continues for about 2 months. By mid-September the early cotton is ready to be harvested. The picking season lasts until about mid-January; any cotton remaining at that time is "pulled" or mechanically "stripped" from the stalks.

Labor requirements for alfalfa are relatively minor, but they do coincide with cotton activity. The first alfalfa cutting begins in the middle of May with possibly four additional cuttings until about October 15. Although the harvest operation is highly mechanized, some workers are employed from May to October harvesting alfalfa. Beans, peas, cucumbers, squash, and cantaloupes are also grown, but these crops are minor in the over-all production and labor picture. The livestock farms use few seasonal workers.

The number of workers required to supplement the on-farm labor force varies

seasonally. Requirements for both counties during the cotton chopping season amount to 3,500 workers. In the fall, the local offices of the Employment Security Commission of New Mexico report approximately 11,000 seasonal workers employed at peak season in cotton and alfalfa harvesting. Approximately 2,500 of these harvest workers are local. Most of the remaining workers are Mexican nationals brought into the United States under an international agreement between the United States and Mexico. The recruitment and placement of Mexican workers are supervised by the United States Department of Labor which certifies the need for foreign farm laborers only after it is demonstrated that domestic workers doing the same work are not available. As many as 8,000 Mexican workers are reported to be employed in the two counties each year. A small number of migrant workers from other parts of New Mexico and from Texas make up the remainder of the seasonal farm labor force.

Roswell, county seat of Chaves County, numbers 26,000 inhabitants, of whom 4,000 are Spanish-American⁴. The labor force approximates 10,000, including 8,000 who are engaged in nonagricultural pursuits. The principal nonfarm activities in the area are construction, government, trades, and services. The only large manufacturing establishment is a meat packing plant. Transportation, communications, and public utilities are other sources of nonagricultural employment. Records of the local public employment offices showed 400 unemployed at the time of the survey, about 4 percent of the total labor force. Although the Spanish-American population is almost 100 percent native born, its integration into the economic life of the city is not complete. Observations made during the survey indicate that unemployment was higher among Spanish-Americans than in the labor force as a whole, and their income was much lower.

⁴/ Persons of Spanish Surname, United States Census of Population, 1950, Special Report P-E No.3c, Tables 7, 8, 9. U. S. Government Printing Office, 1953.

Consequently, many Spanish-American workers sought seasonal farm jobs in nearby farms or traveled in crews to other States for work in the cotton harvest.

Artesia, in Eddy County, is about 40 miles south of Roswell. About one-sixth of the 9,000 inhabitants of Artesia are Spanish-American, and most of these are native born citizens of the United States. Artesia is a center of the potash mining and milling industry. Petroleum refining and natural gas are also important in-

dustries. In May 1952, unemployment was high--6 percent of the total labor force. Most of the skilled jobs in the mining and manufacturing industries are filled by Anglo-American workers. Spanish-Americans are generally employed in unskilled jobs in the service industries. Consequently, some of them alternated between jobs in the cattle and cotton farms and occasional nonfarm jobs in town. Crews of Spanish-American workers are organized for migration to northern Texas or to Arizona for cotton harvesting.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS AND WORKERS

The 92 households from which schedules were taken were mostly Spanish-American. More than half of the households in the surveyed group were above average in size. The average urban household in New Mexico has 3.4 members^{5/}. However, two-thirds of the households surveyed had 4 or more members and one-half had 5 or more members (table 1). Almost all of the households surveyed were headed by male workers.

Size of Households

Of the 476 persons in the surveyed households, 181 had worked for wages in the preceding year. The number of workers averaged 2 per household, (table 2). In about one-third of the households there was only 1 worker, in one-third there were 2 workers; and in the remaining third 3 or more persons had worked for wages in the preceding year.

5/ Census of Population, P-B 31, 1950. Op. cit. Table 22, page 25.

Table 1. Distribution of surveyed households by sex of the head of the household and by size of household, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952 1/

Persons in households	Total households	Households with	
		Male heads	Female heads
Total	84	75	9
1	3	2	1
2	11	7	4
3	12	12	--
4	14	14	--
5 or more	44	40	4

1/Excludes eight households in survey group for which information was not given.

Table 2. Households by size of household and by number of persons who had worked for wages in preceding year, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952 1/

Persons in households	Total households	Households by number workers					5 or more workers
		1 worker	2 workers	3 workers	4 workers		
Total	84	32	30	15	5	2	
1	3	3	--	--	--	--	
2	11	4	7	--	--	--	
3	12	4	8	--	--	--	
4	14	10	3	1	--	--	
5	44	11	12	14	5	2	

1/Excludes eight households in survey group for which information was not given.

Age and Sex Distribution and Family Composition

In many parts of the South, seasonal farm workers are described as marginal workers in terms of their age and sex distribution. Usually they are very young or very old workers, and very often female workers predominate. This is not the case in Roswell and Artesia where 2 or 3 farm workers in the households surveyed were found to be men. Furthermore, there were very few school-age youth of either sex who had done any wage work at all in the preceding year. Only 4 workers under 14, about 2 percent of all farm workers, were reported in the farm laborer households (table 3), and only 16 children under 16 were in the group surveyed. The proportion of workers aged 55 and above was approximately the same as the proportion aged 55 and over in the labor force generally in New Mexico^{6/}. Workers in the 20-54 age group predominated in the farm worker force, and there was a high proportion of young workers, aged 14 to 19. Female workers tended to be in the younger age groups, as some

drop out of the labor force when they assume family responsibilities.

Of the 165 farm workers surveyed, 63 were male household heads and 9 were female household heads (table 5). These are considered primary workers, since the head of the family is usually the main breadwinner. Thus, 2 of 5 farm workers were primary workers which is significantly different from the situation in other cotton-producing areas where seasonal farm work is often relegated to secondary workers.

Educational Attainment

The educational attainment of workers in the survey households was much below the average for Roswell and Artesia, but approximately equivalent to the average number of years of school completed by the population of Spanish surname in Chaves and Eddy Counties. The average adult in these counties had at least 2 years of high school education, but Spanish-speaking persons averaged only 5 years of school in Chaves and 3 years of school in Eddy County^{7/}. By comparison,

6/ 1950 Census of Population, Detailed Statistics, P-C 31, Table 69, page 91 shows that 14.0 percent of males and 9.7 percent of females in the labor force in New Mexico in 1950 were 55 and over.

7/ In 1950, the median years of school completed by persons 25 years old and over in Chaves County was 10.7; in Eddy County, 9.7; in the city of Roswell, 11.2; and in Artesia, 10.5 (Census of Population P-B 31, op. cit.). Workers of Spanish surname, however, averaged 5.3 years of school in Chaves County and 2.6 in Eddy County. (1950 Census of Population, Special Report P-E No. 3c.) 7

Table 3. Workers in surveyed households by age and sex, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Sex and age	All workers		Farm workers	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Both sexes</u>	181	100	165	100
Under 14	4	2	4	2
14 - 19	49	28	49	30
20 - 34	55	30	48	29
35 - 54	51	28	44	27
55 - 64	16	9	15	9
65 and over	6	3	5	3
<u>Males</u>	121	100	108	100
Under 14	--	--	--	--
14 - 19	30	25	30	28
20 - 34	37	30	32	30
35 - 54	37	31	31	29
55 - 64	11	9	10	9
65 and over	6	5	5	5
<u>Females</u>	60	100	57	100
Under 14	4	7	4	7
14 - 19	19	31	19	33
20 - 34	18	30	16	28
35 - 54	14	24	13	23
55 - 64	5	8	5	9
65 and over	--	--	--	--

adult workers in the surveyed households reported 3.8 grades of school completed (table 4). Younger workers tended to be better educated than their elders, but, even in the 18-19 age group, the average was only 5.8 years of school. Those workers who engaged in farm work only

had lower levels of scholastic attainment than those who were partially employed at nonfarm jobs. Among workers 25 and over, women reported more years of school completed than men, but among workers aged 16 to 24 boys had more education than girls.

Table 4. Median grade of school completed of all workers in surveyed households, by age, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Age	Median grade completed
	Total
	4.6
Under 14	3.0
14 - 15	5.5
16 - 17	5.0
18 - 19	5.8
20 - 24	3.0
25 and over	3.8

Farm-Nonfarm Experience and Skills

The 181 wage workers in the surveyed households included 16 who had done only nonfarm work in the preceding year. These were employed mainly in unskilled and semiskilled urban occupations, as craftsmen, operatives in processing industries, laborers, and household service workers.

The focus of attention in this study was on the remaining 165 farm workers who had done only farm work or who had shifted back and forth between farm and nonfarm jobs. Of these about two-thirds reported only farm jobs; and about one-fifth were predominantly farm workers who reported some nonfarm work during off-seasons. The remaining workers in the group were predominantly nonfarm workers with occasional farm jobs.

Apart from some formal education, 95 percent of the group of farm workers surveyed had no special occupational training or skills. When asked whether

they had had any training other than their usual work, only 5 percent replied affirmatively. These few reported some experience in crafts, trades, and other skilled jobs.

In terms of duration of farm employment (table 5), 98 of the 165 farm workers were long-term seasonal farm workers with 17 to 40 weeks of farm-work experience in the preceding year. The 48 workers whose farm work totaled 16 weeks or less may be considered either short-term seasonal workers (5 to 16 weeks) or casual farm workers (4 weeks or less). On the other hand, the surveyed group included 19 regular farm workers with more than 40 weeks of employment in agriculture. The majority of family heads, wives, and sons and daughters over 16 were either long-term seasonal farm workers or regular farm workers. The group of short-term and casual workers consisted partly of children under 16 and partly of adults for whom farm work was not the main activity during the year.

Table 5. Farm workers in survey households by relationship to head of household and duration of farm work in the preceding year, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Relationship to head of household	Total	Farm Workers Weeks of farm employment 1/			
		1-4	5-16	17-40	over 40
Total	165	12	36	98	19
Male heads	63	4	7	40	12
Female heads	9	3	2	4	--
Wives	21	1	6	14	--
Sons, age 16 and over 2/	29	2	6	17	4
Daughters, age 16 and over 2/	17	1	3	13	--
Children under 16	16	--	10	5	1
Other	10	1	2	5	2

1/Casual, 1-4 weeks of farm work; short-term seasonal, 5-16 weeks; long-term seasonal, 17-40 weeks; regular, over 40.

2/Includes sons-in-law, daughters-in-law.

Table 6. Average man-weeks in labor force and non-labor force status of farm workers in surveyed households, by relationship to head of household 1/, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Relationship to head of household	Number of workers	Average man-weeks in labor force				Average man-weeks not in labor force			
		Total	Farm work	Nonfarm work	Looking for work	Total	Keeping house	Attending school	Other
Total farm workers	165	38	26	7	5	10	6	3	1
Male heads	63	47	30	11	6	1	--	3/	1
Female heads	9	25	14	8	3	23	18	--	5
Wives	21	23	20	3	3/	25	25	--	--
Sons, 16 and over 2/	29	43	27	8	8	5	--	3	2
Daughters, 16 and over 2/	17	32	28	3/	4	16	12	2	2
Children under 16	16	25	20	2	3	23	3	20	--
Others	10	40	25	6	9	8	--	7	1

1/For purposes of this study, year considered to have 48 weeks.

2/Includes sons-in-law, daughters-in-law.

3/Less than 0.5 weeks.

Labor Force Status of Farm Workers

On the average, farm workers surveyed had spent 38 weeks in the labor force in the preceding year and 10 weeks not in the labor force^{8/}. Of the 38 weeks in the labor force, 26 were in farm jobs, 7 were in nonfarm work, and 5 were spent looking for work (table 6). Male family heads and sons over 16 spent more than 40 weeks in the labor force and reported more nonfarm work, on the average, than wives, children, and other household

members. A small proportion of the workers interviewed were daughters over 16 who averaged 28 weeks of farm work and 4 weeks of unemployment; the remainder of the year they were not in the labor force. There were also a small number of children under 16 in the surveyed group. These divided their time between attending school and working. More girls than boys under 16 were employed, and these girls averaged more employment during the year than boys.

UNEMPLOYMENT OF FARM WAGE WORKERS

Unemployment is a regularly recurring feature in the life of many farm workers living in Roswell and Artesia, New Mexico. At certain months during the late winter as many as 40 percent of

this group of workers were reported unemployed compared with over-all unemployment of 4 percent in Roswell and 6 percent in Artesia at that time. On the average about one-seventh of those farm

8/ For purposes of this study, the year was considered to have 48 weeks. Persons in the labor force include those employed and those who are not working but who are available for work.

workers who were in the labor force were unemployed, while the national average unemployment rate for wage and salary workers in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries during 1952 was 4 percent^{9/}.

Two-thirds of the group surveyed were not working at some time during the year. Some attended school, some were engaged in their own housework; a few were ill, were taking vacations, and so on. To arrive at the percentage of unemployed, workers were asked to explain why they were not working for each week in which "no work" was reported. Those who said they were looking for work or that they would have looked for jobs but believed that no work was available were classified as unemployed. By this definition, unemployment amounted to 10 percent of the labor force surveyed in August in the "lay-by" period between cotton-chopping and picking. During the harvest peak, unemployment dropped to 1 percent. By February the unemployment rate had

climbed to about one-third of those in the labor force, and in March and April 40 percent were involuntarily jobless (table 7).

Characteristics of Unemployed Farm Workers

Farm workers of every description were unemployed at some time during the year, but the incidence of unemployment affected mostly adult male workers who were continuously in the labor force. Table 8 shows that 69 farm workers of the 165 interviewed had one or more periods of unemployment during the year. Of this group, 70 percent were adult male workers compared with 56 percent adult males in the sample. Wives and female household heads were unemployed less than men since they withdrew from the labor force when not actually employed. The fact that so many of the workers in Roswell and Artesia who do farm work are primary workers makes their unemployment par-

9/ Annual Report on the Labor Force 1952, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Labor Force, P-50, No. 45, Table K.

Table 7. Unemployment rates of surveyed farm workers in Roswell-Artesia, by months, June 1951-May 1952 1/

Year and month	Percent of labor force unemployed
<u>1951</u>	
June	2.9
July	6.9
August	9.7
September	3.0
October	2.3
November	0.7
December	6.0
<u>1952</u>	
January	17.3
February	31.7
March	41.7
April	39.8
May	26.0
Average	14.4

1/See also Chart 1, page and Appendix Table A, page

ticularly severe. When only secondary workers are unemployed, the family still has an income from its primary source.

Duration of Unemployment

As a result of the frequent occurrence of long periods of unemployment in the surveyed group, 1 of 3 workers in the sample had been unemployed 9 weeks or more

in the preceding year and 1 of 10 had been unemployed for more than 16 weeks (table 10). Male family heads and sons over 16 experienced greater unemployment, as a rule, than other family members. Thirty-seven percent of the men and 38 percent of the grown sons were jobless for more than 9 weeks compared with only 11 percent for female heads and 19 percent for children under 16. Unemployment was also

Table 8. Characteristics of farm workers in surveyed households unemployed at some time during the year, July 1951-May 1952, compared with characteristics of the surveyed group, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Category of worker	Farm workers in survey group		Farm workers with one or more periods of unemployment ^{1/}	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Relationship to head				
All workers	165	100	69	100
Male heads	63	38	31	45
Female heads	9	5	1	1
Wives	21	13	3	4
Sons, 16 and over ^{2/}	29	18	17	25
Daughters, 16 and over ^{2/}	17	10	6	9
Children under 16	16	10	5	7
Other	10	6	6	9
Type of work ^{3/}				
All workers	165	100	69	100
Farm work only	104	63	43	62
Mostly farm work	34	21	17	25
Mostly nonfarm work	27	16	9	13
Type of farm worker ^{4/}				
All workers	165	100	69	100
Casual	12	7	2	3
Short-term seasonal	36	22	10	15
Long-term seasonal	98	59	56	81
Regular	19	12	1	1

^{1/}Exclusive of 7 unemployed workers who did not report on their period of unemployment.

^{2/}Includes sons-in-law, daughters-in-law.

^{3/}Refers to work done most of the time in the preceding year.

^{4/}Casual, 1-4 weeks of farm work; short-term seasonal, 5-16 weeks; long-term seasonal, 17-40 weeks; regular, more than 40 weeks.

Table 9. Periods of unemployment of farm workers in surveyed households by relationship to head of household and duration of individual periods of unemployment, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, June 1951-May 1952

Relationship to head of household	Farm workers with one or more periods of unemployment	Total	Periods of unemployment				
			Duration in weeks	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16
Total	69	100		27	24	28	12
Male heads	31	44		10	13	13	7
Female heads	1	2	--	1	--	--	1
Wives of heads	3	5		1	1	1	1
Sons, 16 and over 1/	17	23		8	5	4	3
Daughters, 16 and over 1/	6	10		4	1	3	1
Children under 16	5	7		3	1	3	--
Others	6	9		1	2	4	--

1/ Includes sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.

considerable among daughters aged 16 and
and over.

Persons who worked mostly at non-farm jobs with occasional employment in agriculture were unemployed less often than those who worked primarily or exclusively at farm work. Unemployment was highest among long-term seasonal farm workers. Short-term seasonal workers and casual workers were out of the labor force when not actually working, and, technically, they were not considered unemployed. On the other hand, of farm workers with year-round farm jobs, only 1 in 19 reported a period of unemployment.

Frequency and Duration of Periods of Unemployment

The severity of unemployment may be measured by the frequency and duration of individual periods of joblessness. Table 9 shows that the 69 unemployed workers reported a total of 100 periods of unemployment during the year. That means that some of the unemployed had had two or more periods of unemployment during the year. The duration of individual periods of unemployment varied from 1 week to 5 months or more. The average period of unemployment lasted 8.9 weeks.

Table 10. Farm workers in surveyed households by total weeks of unemployment, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, June 1951-May 1952

Weeks of unemployment	Farm Workers	
	Number	Percent
Total	165	100
0 Weeks	89	54
1 - 4	17	10
5 - 8	11	7
9 - 16	32	19
More than 16	16	10

Table 11. Farm workers in surveyed households employed at farm jobs in the 2 weeks preceding interview by total hours worked in those 2 weeks, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Hours worked at farm jobs	Farm workers	
	Number	Percent
Total	81	100
20-39	3	4
40-59	25	31
60-79	6	7
80-99	8	10
100-119	18	22
120-139	20	25
More than 139	1	1

Most periods of unemployment began in January, February, or March and ended in May or later. For example, 23 of 100 periods of unemployment began in February. Of these, 2 ended the same month, 3 in March, and 2 in April. The remaining 16 either ended in May or were still continuing when the survey was made in the last week of the month.

Partial Employment

Even during periods of employment some time was lost by the workers sur-

veyed because of weather conditions, time spent in moving between jobs, waiting for crops to mature, and other reasons. To measure the extent and severity of partial employment among farm workers surveyed in Roswell and Artesia, questions were asked about their experience in the 2 weeks immediately preceding the time of the interview, which was at the beginning of the cotton cultivating season.

Of the 165 farm workers surveyed, 81 had been employed at farm jobs in the preceding 2-week period. Those workers

Table 12. Days not worked in 2 weeks preceding interview by relationship to head of household and reason for not working ^{1/}

Relationship to head of household	Number days not worked	Percent of days lost by reason					
		All rea- sons	Weather and crop conditions	No work available	In transit	House- hold duties	Other and unknown
Total	155	100	11	17	29	12	31
Male heads	58	100	16	22	21	--	41
Wives	21	100	14	--	5	48	33
Daughters, 16 and over	37	100	13	22	35	22	8
Children under 16	39	100	--	13	49	--	38

^{1/} Limited to surveyed workers who had done farm work in preceding 2 weeks, and not including Saturdays and Sundays as days "not worked." No absences were reported by sons, 16 and over, female heads, and "other" household members.

employed at the time of the survey reported an average of 44.4 hours per week (table 11), while almost half of them had averaged 50 hours or longer per week.

Most of the male household heads and sons over 16 reported six 10-hour days of work per week, while wives, daughters, and children under 16 averaged 3 days a week or less.

Considering 5 days as a normal work-week, the potential number of days of work for this group of 81 workers was 810

days. Actually, only 655 days of work were reported, while 155 man-days were lost for various reasons. Table 12 shows that loss of time by men was usually attributed to lack of work, weather or crop conditions, or movement from one job to another. The most frequent cause of absence from work by wives was the responsibility for keeping up with household chores. Daughters over 16 and children under 16 reported that they most frequently lost days because of moving from one job to another or because no work was available.

PATTERNS OF EMPLOYMENT

The seasonal nature of the farm work, the high rate of turnover, and the short duration of jobs contribute to the insecurity of the farm workers surveyed.

Seasonality of Employment

The pattern of employment of farm workers living in Roswell and Artesia falls into two distinct phases (see chart and appendix table A). From January through April, 65 percent of the farm workers, mostly adult males, are in the labor force. Beginning in May and extending through December, the labor force is increased by secondary workers--housewives, children under 16, and others. This pattern is set by the seasonal nature of cotton cultivating and harvesting.

Although there was some nonfarm work reported by the surveyed group, farm work was most important practically all year. In June, 5 of 6 persons in the labor force worked at farm jobs. The proportion dropped during the midsummer lull between chopping and picking of cotton, and it rose again in the fall. At the harvest peak from mid-September to the end of November, 7 of 8 persons in the labor force reported farm work. In February, March, and April, farm work

was at low ebb, employing only about 30 percent of those in the labor force. In May 1952, the proportion working in agriculture began to rise again seasonally.

During seasons of the year when agricultural work declined, an increase of nonfarm jobs was reported. In July and August, about one-sixth of the workers in the labor force were working at nonagricultural jobs, including domestic service. This number dropped to about 10 percent during the cotton harvest, rising again to about one-third of all workers in the labor force in the midwinter slack season.

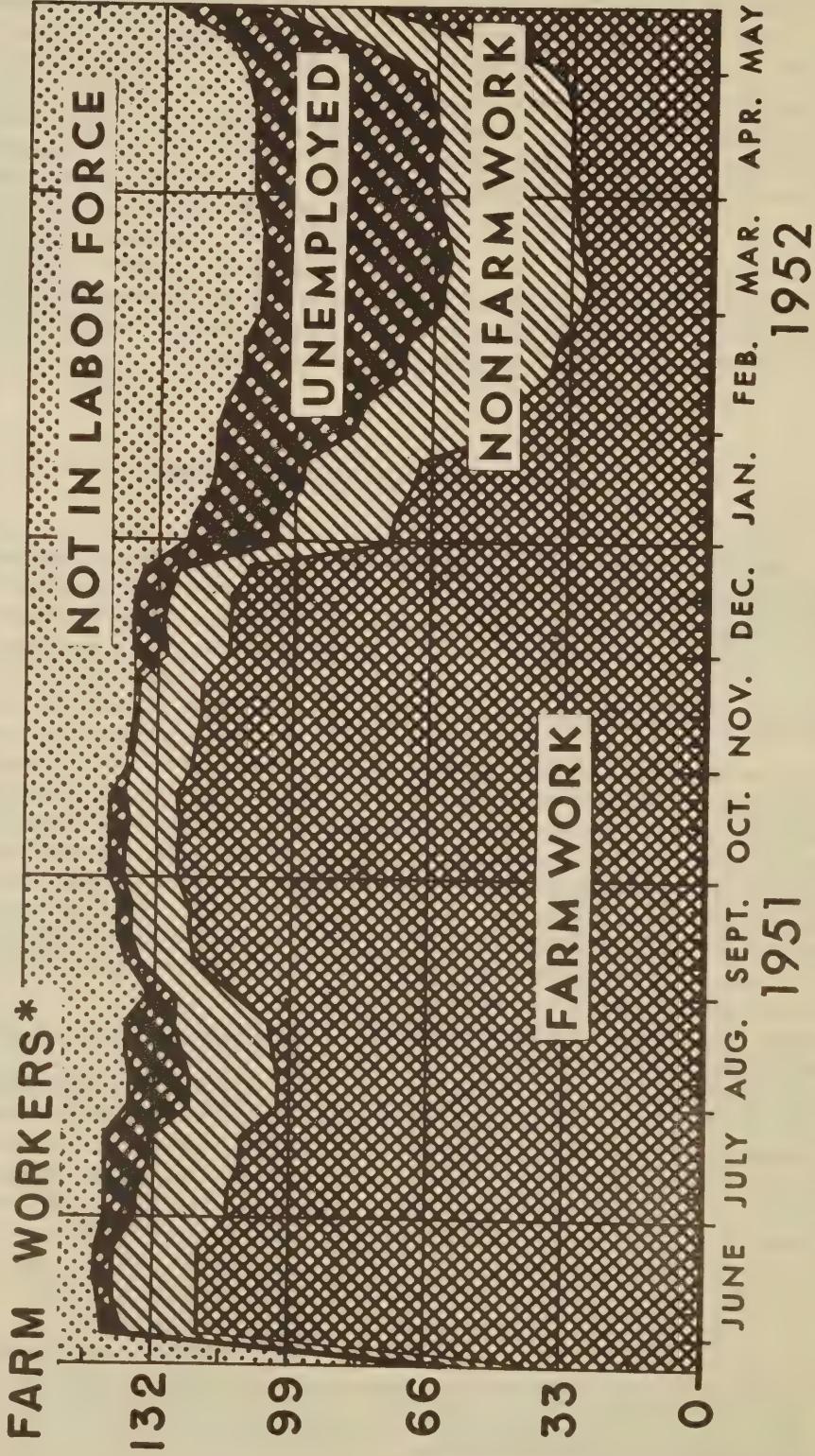
Intermittent Nature of Employment

In addition to seasonality of employment, a second factor associated with the unemployment of farm workers in Roswell and Artesia is the frequent shifts from job to job. The study was designed to focus attention on a group of marginal workers who live in cities but supply some of the farm labor needs in their immediate locality. On the one hand, this group of workers has less job stability than other nonfarm workers living in the same cities. On the other hand, the members of this group have less job security than regular on-farm workers in nearby rural areas

In Roswell and Artesia, New Mexico

FARM WAGE WORKERS

Distribution by Labor Force Status, May 1951 - May 1952



* PERSONS IN THE SURVEY WHO DID FARM WAGE WORK AT ANY TIME DURING YEAR
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NEG. 48888-XX BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

Chart No. 1.

Table 13. Farm workers in surveyed households by number of periods of employment in preceding year and by relationship of worker to head of household, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Relationship to head of household	Total	Farm workers							Median number periods of employment per worker	
		Periods of employment								
		1	2	3	4	5	6 or more			
Total	165	22	34	45	39	18	7		3	
Male heads	63	5	11	18	13	12	4		3	
Female heads	9	3	1	1	3	--	1		3	
Wives	21	5	8	6	2	--	--		2	
Sons, 16 and over 1/	29	2	4	6	12	4	1		4	
Daughters, 16 and over 1/	17	1	3	5	6	2	--		3	
Children under 16	16	6	5	2	3	--	--		2	
Others	10	--	2	7	--	--	1		3	

1/ Includes sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.

Table 14. Number of periods of employment begun and ended each month by farm workers in surveyed households compared with total employment, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, June 1951 - April 1952 1/

Year and month	Number of workers employed	Number of jobs	
		Begun	Ended
Average	113	34	33
<u>1951</u>			
June	146	97	12
July	145	7	26
August	140	22	83
September	140	101	35
October	144	33	9
November	139	8	30
December	138	28	66
<u>1952</u>			
January	122	37	39
February	115	20	42
March	108	18	14
April	109	15	12

1/ Beginning and ending months of survey period (May 1951 and May 1952) omitted since jobs reported as having begun or ended in those months may have extended beyond survey period.

who are engaged in livestock production. The surveyed group is characterized by intermittent employment in agricultural as well as other jobs. The 165 farm workers studied reported 515 periods of employment, an average of more than 3 per worker, usually 2 farm jobs and 1 non-farm job in the course of a year (table 13). A "job" in this study connotes a period of continuous employment at a specified activity in one place even though more than one employer may be involved. Most of the jobs--80 percent--were farm jobs, principally cotton cultivating and harvesting. When not employed at farm jobs, male workers "picked up" casual nonfarm jobs as laborers in the construction industry, in food processing, on railroads, in trucking firms, in restaurants, in laundries, and in filling stations. Female workers, when not doing farm work, were frequently employed as private household workers. A few of the more highly trained workers reported skilled occupations, such as carpenters, telephone operators, painters, mechanics, and repairmen. Two of them were reported to

have been proprietors of restaurants at some time during the survey year.

Turnover rates among these hired workers were extremely high. On the average, 34 persons began jobs each month and 33 workers ended jobs each month, while monthly employment averaged only 113 (table 14). This is roughly equivalent to an accession and separation rate of about 30 percent per month. During active seasons, rates are much higher. For all nonagricultural industries, an accession rate and a separation rate of 4 percent are about average.

Turnover rates would be even higher than 30 percent if "jobs" were counted in the usual sense, that is, number of changes of employers. The farm workers who were surveyed changed employers an average of twice during each period of employment. Approximately one-third of all periods of farm work were actually a series of jobs with 5 or more employers, and a considerable number were for 10 or more growers (table 15).

Table 15. Periods of farm work reported by surveyed farm workers by number of employers per period and by type of farm workers, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Type of farm workers 1/	Total	Periods of farm work										Median number employers per period of farm employment
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 or more	
Total	420	120	61	50	55	26	19	11	18	1	59	2
Casual	13	5	3	2	--	--	--	2	--	--	1	2
Short-term seasonal	52	13	7	9	10	--	2	3	1	--	7	3
Long-term seasonal	296	76	44	35	37	20	12	6	16	1	49	3
Regular	59	26	7	4	8	6	5	--	1	--	2	2

1/Casual, 1-4 weeks farm work; short-term seasonal, 5-16 weeks; long-term seasonal, 17-40 weeks; regular, over 40 weeks.

Table 16. Periods of employment reported by surveyed farm workers by days worked and by crop activity, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Days worked per period of employment	Periods of farm work						Periods of nonfarm work	
	Total		Cotton		Live- stock	Other	Num- ber	Percent
	Number	Percent	Culti- vating	Harvest- ing				
Total	420	100	158	173	14	75	95	100
Less than 10	57	13	45	5	--	7	8	8
11-20	39	9	18	14	2	5	17	18
21-40	73	17	23	39	--	11	13	14
41-60	86	20	34	27	6	19	15	15
61-80	77	18	24	41	3	9	10	11
81-100	33	8	4	25	1	3	11	12
Over 100	27	6	--	14	2	11	19	20
Not reported	28	7	10	8	--	10	2	2

Duration of Farm Jobs

The average individual period of farm employment lasted 50 days, while the average period of nonfarm employment was only slightly longer. Only 6 percent of farm jobs and 20 percent of nonfarm jobs were of more than 100 days duration (table 16). Individual cotton-harvesting jobs usually began in September and lasted for about 60 days although the season was longer, while individual cotton cultivating jobs averaged about 30 days in length, beginning in May or June. Nonfarm jobs

varied in duration, but more than half of them yielded less than 60 days of employment.

Methods of Recruitment for Farm Jobs

In a setting characterized by intermittent employment of short duration, the worker is often in the job market. His security depends on how quickly and efficiently he can find another job. The survey showed that institutional arrangements for finding out about jobs and for recruitment

Table 17. Periods of farm employment reported by survey farm workers by method of recruitment, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Method of Recruitment	Periods of farm employment	
	Number	Percent
Total	420	100
Personal search	131	31
Crew leader	81	19
Friend or relative	78	19
Previous contact with employer	74	18
Other and unspecified	33	8
Solicited by employer	23	5

of workers were informal. Most workers reported that they found jobs through their own efforts, through information obtained from relatives and friends, or by returning to employers for whom they had previously worked (table 17). About one-fifth of the farm jobs were obtained through crew leaders, but information was not obtained as to how these crew leaders made their contacts. More than half of the out-of-

State jobs were arranged by crew leaders. The public employment service was credited with placing some workers. None of the workers reported having been placed by private employment agencies. Newspaper ads and handbills, which were widely used by growers during the thirties to attract migratory workers to New Mexico, do not figure at all in the recruitment practices of the present-day farm employer.

WAGE EARNINGS OF FARM WORKERS

As a consequence of irregular employment and extensive unemployment, the average individual earnings for the 165 farm workers surveyed in Roswell and Artesia was \$900 from about 130 days of farm work and 35 days of nonfarm work. This is approximately one-half of the average individual wage and salary earnings of urban and rural nonfarm workers in New Mexico^{10/}. It is approximately equivalent, however, to the average cash wage earnings of farm workers in the United States in 1951^{11/}.

In reading the wage data in table 18, it is important to consider that there were several construction workers in the sample who had done a small amount of farm work as well as nonfarm work. The in-

clusion of these workers, whose incomes were well above \$2,000 for the year from nonfarm sources, affected the average for all workers. The average also may have been affected upward by the method of obtaining the information. Workers were asked to recall each job they had had in the preceding year and the approximate duration of each job. From this information and the wage rates, wage earnings per job were computed. Assuming the respondents were accurate about the length of time employed on each job, the estimate of total wage earnings might be high because no correction was made for time lost because of weather, because of moving from farm to farm, and for other reasons. Workers also tended to quote wage rates for picking cotton that may

10/ Median wage and salary earnings of persons 14 years and over, 1949, urban and rural nonfarm \$1,841 for New Mexico. 1950 United States Census of Population, Detailed Characteristics, P-C 31, Table 93.

11/ \$879 for 146 days of farm work and 28 days of nonfarm work, The Hired Farm Working Force of 1951, Louis J. Ducoff and Eleanor M. Birch, U. S. Department of Agriculture, October 1952. This average is based on farm workers with 25 days or more of farm wage work. See also Income of Persons in the United States: 1951, Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, Bureau of the Census, P-60, No. 11, May 1953, Table 5, showing income of farm laborers and foremen from all sources (including nonwage income) as \$1,057 in 1951. The median income of laborers other than farm and mine was \$2,281, and the median income for service workers, not including private households, was \$2,474 in 1951. See also 1950 Census of Population, Persons of Spanish Surname Special Report P-E No. 3c, Table 6 which shows average individual income of \$1,400 (all sources) for urban persons of Spanish surname in New Mexico, 1949.

have been the last rate paid or the highest rate paid in the season rather than a season average rate.

Data in table 18 are individual wage earnings, not family earnings. It will be noted that the average male family head reported \$1,256 income from farm and nonfarm work in 1951-52, while sons over 16 averaged \$1,033, with about one-third of the income for adult males from non-farm sources. Wives, female heads of families, daughters over 16, and children under 16--who averaged fewer weeks of employment during the year--usually accounted for about \$500 of wage income. Not included in table 18 are 16 nonfarm workers who lived in some of these house-

holds and contributed to the family income but performed no farm work during the year.

There were wide variations in individual earnings reported depending on the amount of work done in the preceding year. Regular farm workers, with more than 40 weeks of work in agriculture, grossed \$1,346. Most workers, however, were long-term seasonal workers (17-40 weeks) with wage incomes between \$900 and \$1,000 from all sources. Casual farm workers sometimes had high income from nonfarm sources, as in the case of a carpenter who had taken a job picking cotton during a lull between construction jobs. The average income for short-term

Table 18. Average individual wage earnings reported by surveyed farm workers from farm and nonfarm employment in year preceding interview by relationship of workers to head of household, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Relationship to head	Farm workers (number)	Average gross earnings		
		Farm and nonfarm work	Farm work	Nonfarm work
Total	165	\$ 909 ² /	\$699	\$243
Male heads	63	1,256	864	456
Female heads	9	406	394	17
Wives	21	507	450	55
Sons, 16 and over ¹	29	1,033	810	282
Daughters, 16 and over ¹	17	656	650	3
Children under 16	16	500	441	53
Others	10	745	630	105

¹/ Includes sons-in-law and daughters-in-law.

²/ This is not the sum of average income from farm work and average income from nonfarm work because of mathematical computation of weighted averages from grouped data.

(5 to 17 weeks) seasonal workers was less than \$500.

fourth of the jobs reported, payment was made to workers by crew leaders.

Methods of Payment and Wage Rates

Most farm jobs were arranged by the worker himself negotiating with farmers who paid workers directly. In about one-

The method of payment varied with the crop activity. Workers were paid by the hour or day for cotton cultivating, by the hundredweight for cotton harvesting. Livestock hands were usually paid by the

Table 19. Farm jobs reported by surveyed workers by unit of payment and wages paid, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Unit of payment and wage	Total farm jobs ^{1/}	Cotton		Live-stock	Tractor or driver	Other activity
		Cultivating	Harvesting			
Total	420	158	173	14	23	52
Month	3	-	-	2	-	1
\$240	1	-	-	-	-	1
125	1	-	-	1	-	-
120	1	-	-	1	-	-
Week	5	-	-	3	-	2
\$ 40	1	-	-	1	-	-
35	1	-	-	1	-	-
30	2	-	-	-	-	-
28	1	-	-	1	-	-
Day	62	33	1	7	6	15
\$6.00 and over	10	-	1	4	2	3
5.00 - 5.99	31	14	-	1	4	12
4.00 - 4.99	20	19	-	1	-	-
3.00 - 3.99	1	-	-	1	-	-
Hour	151	118	-	-	10	23
\$.80 or more	1	-	-	-	-	1
.70 - .79	2	1	-	-	-	1
.60 - .69	27	17	-	-	3	7
.50 - .59	106	86	-	-	7	13
.40 - .49	15	14	-	-	-	1
Piece Rate	172	-	170	-	2	-
\$4.00 - 4.99 cwt.	4	-	4	-	-	-
3.00 - 3.99 "	38	-	38	-	-	-
2.00 - 2.99 "	107	-	107	-	-	-
Less than \$2.00 cwt.	23	-	21	-	2	-
Other and unspecified	27	7	2	2	5	11

^{1/}Periods of employment.

day, week, or month. Truck drivers were paid either by the hour or by the load, depending on crop practices (table 19).

Cotton picking, the most frequent farm job, usually brought \$2 to \$3 per 100 pounds. The going rate for cotton chopping was \$.50 to \$.60 per hour or \$4 to \$5 a day. Livestock workers were paid best, \$6 and over a day. Some of the workers reported jobs on other farms, usually hauling at a rate of \$.50 to \$.60 an hour, \$5-\$6 a day, or a specified rate per truckload hauled.

Perquisites were almost never given to the farm workers surveyed. However, this may reflect the fact that these were urban workers who were not typical of all farm workers in New Mexico in this regard. Only 8 workers reported having received housing in connection with cotton jobs, and 2 workers on livestock farms indicated that they were furnished housing for their families while working. A small fraction of the workers were transported to and from their work. For the most part the respondents either said they had received no "extras" or they

Table 20. Nonfarm jobs reported by surveyed farm workers by unit of payment and wage rate, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Unit and wage rate	Nonfarm jobs 1/
<u>Total</u>	95
<u>Month</u>	3
\$100-199	3
<u>Week</u>	17
\$50-59	2
40-49	4
30-39	5
20-29	4
10-19	2
<u>Day</u>	13
\$7.00 and above	1
6.00 - 6.99	2
5.00 - 5.99	3
4.00 - 4.99	2
3.00 - 3.99	3
2.00 - 2.99	1
1.00 - 1.99	1
<u>Hour</u>	50
\$2.00 - 2.24	3
1.75 - 1.99	5
1.50 - 1.74	3
1.25 - 1.49	9
1.00 - 1.24	12
.75 - .99	11
.50 - .74	7
<u>Other and unspecified</u>	12

1/Periods of employment

Table 21. Daily earnings in farm jobs reported by surveyed farm workers, by category of worker, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951 - May 1952

Category of worker	No. of farm jobs	Percent	Percent of jobs by earnings per day								Median
			\$2.00-4.00	\$4.00-4.99	\$5.00-5.99	\$6.00-6.99	\$7.00-7.99	\$8.00-8.99	\$9.00 and over		
Total	420	100	4%	38%	21%	9%	10%	2%	16%	\$5.36	
Male heads	163	100	4	35	25	9	9	3	15	5.45	
Female heads	20	100	-	30	25	15	5	5	20	5.80	
Wives	43	100	12	35	25	12	4	-	12	5.14	
Sons, 16 & over	80	100	3	33	20	12	16	1	15	5.75	
Daughters 16 & over	55	100	5	44	11	5	13	2	20	5.08	
Children under 16	33	100	3	61	24	-	6	-	6	4.78	
Others	26	100	4	46	11	-	4	8	27	5.00	
Total	420	100	4	38	21	9	10	2	16	\$5.36	
Casual	13	100	-	62	-	15	-	8	15	4.81	
Short-term seasonal	52	100	6	38	25	4	2	2	23	4.22	
Long-term seasonal	296	100	5	38	21	9	12	2	13	5.33	
Regular	59	100	-	32	27	10	5	2	24	5.66	

did not respond, which may indicate that the question was not clearly understood since many were migrants who needed housing away from home. In the few cases where housing was reported, it was usually reported by male family heads and sons over 16. Wives and daughters, if they worked at all, usually lived at home while working. The jobs for which housing was reported were associated with high wages.

Nonfarm jobs generally paid higher unit wages than farm jobs (table 20). For example, 151 farm jobs were paid on an hourly rate with 133 of them between \$.50 and \$.69 per hour. On the other hand, two-thirds of the nonfarm jobs paid by the hour yielded \$1 or more. Three nonfarm jobs at a rate of \$2 to \$2.24 were reported. Nonfarm jobs paid by the day or week

also averaged higher wages than farm jobs paid by the day or week.

Converting all wages into daily wage equivalents, it was found that average daily earnings for farm work were between \$5 and \$6 while nonfarm work usually paid \$8 a day or more (tables 21 and 22). Housewives who worked could usually earn more at farm work than nonfarm work, however. The survey showed that wives and female household heads earned approximately \$4 per day from nonfarm work, usually domestic service, compared with \$5 or more a day picking or chopping cotton.

Although many farm workers surveyed were employed in nonfarm activities, only 2 workers benefited from unemployment compensation. Furthermore, only 2 work-

ers reported having received any relief or welfare payments during their off-season periods. It is apparent that the workers in Roswell and Artesia, having experienced unemployment year after year, met the crises through supplementary

earnings of other workers in their families, by having more than one person in a family work. If a family head were not working, his son, wife, or daughter might find a job temporarily to bring some money into the household.

Table 22. Daily earnings in nonfarm jobs reported by surveyed farm workers, by relationship of worker to head of household, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1951-May 1952

Relationship to head of household	No. of nonfarm jobs	Percent of jobs by earnings per day								Median
		\$4.00-\$4.99	\$4.00	\$5.00-\$5.99	\$5.00	\$6.00-\$6.99	\$6.00	\$7.00-\$7.99	\$7.00	
Total	95	7	14	6	20	3	16	34	34	\$7.83
Male heads	54	4	6	2	26	5	18	39	39	8.40
Female heads and wives	10	20	40	-	10	-	10	20	20	4.75
Sons, 16 and over	24	9	17	12	17	-	12	33	33	6.75
Others	7	14	29	29	-	-	14	14	14	5.50

AVAILABILITY FOR ADDITIONAL FARM AND NONFARM WORK

Seeking to extend their employment, reduce unemployment, and increase their incomes, about one-third of the workers surveyed migrated periodically to nearby counties and States for seasonal work as cotton pickers. This migration suggests the possibility that many of the surveyed group may be available during off-seasons for recruitment and guidance to places where workers are needed. Special questions were included in the survey schedule to provide information on the migratory movements of the surveyed group and their availability for additional off-season employment.

Migration of Farm Workers

The Pecos Valley is located in the southeastern corner of New Mexico; it is

not far from Texas where some of the farm workers found employment in the cotton harvest during the seasons when no work was available in New Mexico. Some parts of Texas need considerable numbers of outside workers for cotton harvest in August. Thus it was possible for some to work for a short time in Texas during the midsummer lull, returning to New Mexico for the beginning of the cotton harvest season there in September. Other workers found jobs in adjacent counties in New Mexico, and a few reported having worked in other western and northern States. Table 23 shows that one-fourth of the farm jobs of this surveyed group were nonlocal.

One-third of the farm workers surveyed had migrated to other counties and

Table 23. Farm jobs reported by surveyed workers in Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, by location of jobs, May 1951-May 1952

Location of farm jobs	Farm Jobs	
	Number	Percent
Total	420	100
Same county	310	74
Adjacent county	11	3
Other counties in State	1	1/
Adjacent State	75	18
Other States	10	2
Location not reported	13	3

1/ Less than 0.5 percent.

States for farm jobs in the preceding year (table 24). As a rule, migrants traveled in family groups as parts of organized crews following the same routes year after year. A large proportion of these migrant workers were women, including all 9 of the female family heads in the sample. Most of the migrants questioned did not give any reason for leaving each year, but it may be surmised that they did so in order to extend their employment for a longer period of time than would have been possible if they worked only in the vicinity around Roswell and Artesia.

Availability for Off-Season Employment

It has been shown that not all of the workers in the surveyed group work dur-

ing seasons other than the cotton cultivating and harvest periods. Some of the workers retire from the labor force to attend school or to keep house. Some may be available for work locally, but not for out-of-area jobs. To find out what the potential is for increased utilization of the survey group in farm and nonfarm work, all workers in the 16-60 age group were questioned about their work expectations for the coming year, and those who did not expect to be regularly employed were questioned further about the types of work they would be willing to do and the times during the year they would be available for recruitment.

Whether or not these questions were understood is uncertain, since, by the very nature of the subject, questions could not

Table 24. Farm workers in surveyed households with nonlocal jobs by crew status and sex, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Sex	Farm workers with nonlocal jobs			
	Total	Crew members	Not members of crews	Crew status not reported
Total	58	35	18	5
Male	33	17	13	3
Female	25	18	5	2

be framed in terms of concrete situations. Workers were asked if they would be "available" for work without reference to the specific nature of the job, its location or wage rate. Because of the abstractions of the proposition, respondents were not always willing to commit themselves as being available. If it were possible to make a definite, concrete offer of employment, it is probable that more workers might have declared themselves to be available for other jobs. This is shown by the fact that some workers who failed to express willingness to take off-season jobs had in fact been unemployed in the preceding year for periods ranging up to 4 months.

Of the 165 farm workers in the surveyed group, 19 were not questioned as to availability because they were above 60 years of age or below 16. Of the 146 between 16-60, 51 expected to be regularly employed during the following year and therefore not available for off-season jobs, and 14 did not respond at all to these

questions. That left 81 workers between 16 and 60 who did not expect to work regularly in the coming year and who were questioned as to their availability for work during off-seasons (table 25). This group was divided equally between men and women, although men outnumbered women 2 to 1 in the surveyed group. That was because men who had worked off and on in the past year were hopeful of more continuous employment in the following year. Most of those questioned as to availability were not heads of families. This is important, since the conditions under which a secondary worker would accept employment are different from those that would induce a primary worker to accept a job. In most cases, the job location of the head of the family governs the decision as to where the secondary workers will be employed.

Of the 81 workers questioned, more than three-fifths expect to be available for additional local farm jobs, and about three-fourths for additional local nonfarm

Table 25. Farm workers age 16-60 in surveyed households, by sex, relationship to head of household and availability of additional farm and nonfarm jobs, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Sex and Relationship to head	Farm workers in sample				Percent of workers questioned available for 1/			
	16-60 years of age		Total workers questioned	Local farm work	Local nonfarm work	Nonlocal farm work		
	Total	Questioned as to avail- ability 2/						
Total	165	146	81	100	63	73	26	
Male	108	99	41	100	73	80	37	
Head	63	61	22	100	86	91	45	
Nonhead	45	38	19	100	58	68	27	
Female	57	47	40	100	53	63	15	
Head	9	9	6	100	33	50	33	
Nonhead	48	38	34	100	56	67	12	

1/Duplicated percentage figures, since the same workers were sometimes available for local farm work, nonlocal farm work, and local nonfarm work.

2/Workers of 16-60 who expect to work 0-9 months in coming year, or an unspecified number of months.

Table 26. Farm workers, 16-60 1/ in surveyed households available for additional local or nonlocal work, by sex and quarter in which they expect to be available, Roswell-Artesia, New Mexico, May 1952

Quarter available	Farm workers 16-60 available 2/											
	Local farm work			Local nonfarm work			Nonlocal farm work			Total	Male	Female
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female			
Available at some time	51	30	21	59	33	26	21	15	6			
January - March	38	23	15	41	24	17	11	8	3			
April - June	36	20	16	41	22	19	10	7	3			
July - September	13	8	5	18	9	9	6	5	1			
October - December	11	7	4	13	7	6	3	2	1			
Quarter not specified	8	5	3	9	5	4	5	3	2			

1/Workers 16-60 who expect to work less than 10 months in the coming year or an unspecified number of months who were interviewed regarding availability for additional employment.

2/Duplicated figures as some workers are available for more than one category of work and more than one quarter of the year.

jobs at some time during the year. A substantial proportion--26 percent--could be recruited for non-local farm jobs in addition to any jobs they normally might expect to have.

Practically all of the male heads of families questioned as to availability were interested in both local farm and nonfarm jobs to supplement jobs they already held. About one-half would also be willing to travel elsewhere for farm employment. Among household members other than heads, there was less interest in off-sea-

son jobs. Nevertheless, more than half of both male and female secondary workers would accept suitable local farm jobs and two-thirds were available for nonfarm employment. Since these workers are partially dependent on household heads, they were probably less free to accept non-local jobs.

A considerable number of the workers interviewed regarding availability specified that they wanted off-season jobs in the first and second quarters (table 26). These correspond with periods when unemployment was highest.

Appendix Table A. Labor force status of farm workers by week, June 1951-1952

Date	All farm workers (Number)	Percent not in labor force (Percent)	Farm workers in labor force			
			Total (Number)	Farm work (Percent)	Nonfarm work (Percent)	No work (Percent)
June 1951						
1st week	165	12	145	83	13	4
2nd week	165	12	146	83	14	3
3rd week	165	11	147	82	15	3
4th week	165	11	147	82	15	3
July 1951						
1st week	165	12	145	79	16	5
2nd week	165	12	145	79	16	5
3rd week	165	12	145	77	15	8
4th week	165	12	145	77	15	8
August 1951						
1st week	165	16	139	73	17	10
2nd week	165	16	139	73	17	10
3rd week	165	15	140	74	16	10
4th week	165	15	140	75	16	9
September 1951						
1st week	165	19	134	84	11	5
2nd week	165	15	140	88	9	3
3rd week	165	14	142	87	11	2
4th week	165	14	142	87	11	2
October 1951						
1st week	165	13	144	88	10	2
2nd week	165	13	144	88	10	2
3rd week	165	13	144	87	10	3
4th week	165	13	144	88	10	2
November 1951						
1st week	165	15	140	89	10	1
2nd week	165	16	139	88	11	1
3rd week	165	16	138	88	11	1
4th week	165	16	138	88	11	1
December 1951						
1st week	165	16	138	83	11	6
2nd week	165	16	139	82	12	6
3rd week	165	16	138	83	11	6
4th week	165	18	136	81	12	7
January 1952						
1st week	165	24	125	61	22	17
2nd week	165	25	124	60	23	17
3rd week	165	28	119	59	23	18
4th week	165	28	118	58	24	18

Appendix Table A (cont'd)

Date	All farm workers (Number)	Percent not in labor force (Percent)	Farm workers in labor force			
			Total (Number)	Farm work (Percent)	Nonfarm work (Percent)	No work (Percent)
February 1952						
1st week	165	28	118	42	30	28
2nd week	165	30	116	39	32	29
3rd week	165	32	112	33	32	35
4th week	165	32	112	32	33	35
March 1952						
1st week	165	35	108	28	31	41
2nd week	165	35	108	27	31	42
3rd week	165	35	108	28	30	42
4th week	165	35	108	29	29	42
April 1952						
1st week	165	34	109	29	30	41
2nd week	165	34	109	30	30	40
3rd week	165	34	109	30	29	41
4th week	165	33	110	30	31	39
May 1952						
1st week	165	32	112	31	30	39
2nd week	165	30	116	46	27	27
3rd week	165	21	130	62	23	15

